Trial and error or learning curve? Transformations of policy coordination under conditions of illiberal transformation. The case of Hungary

György HAJNAL[1], Éva KOVÁCS[2], Gábor Tamás MOLNÁR[3]

Abstract:

Opening up the "black box" of policy coordination in the executive core is always difficult, not the least since formal-legal arrangements and practices-in-use frequently diverge, which generally turns relevant information sensitive and difficult to access. Particularly so is the case in contexts characterized by an illiberal transformation, where such divergence is much stronger, and the transparency of government institutions and operations is more limited than in established democratic contexts. No wonder that whereas the study of illiberal transformations is nascent, their implications for policy coordination is practically absent in contemporary scholarship. The ambition of this study is, firstly, to explore the changing patterns of policy coordination at the top of the government machinery in an illiberal context. Secondly, we attempt to understand the factors shaping those arrangements by shedding light on how these patterns change over time. Our case of Hungary is specific since it is featuring the fourth consecutive government cycle characterized by admittedly illiberal features. The study relies on key informant interviews and a documentary analysis of relevant legal materials, official data requested for the purpose of this research, other governmental reports and news media content.

[1] Corvinus University of Budapest and Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence

[2] Corvinus University of Budapest, National University of Public Service

[3] Corvinus University of Budapest